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27 January 1967

MEMORANDUM FOR: SB/RR

SUBJECT : Various Opinions Expressed by Volodymyr Gavrylovych SOKURENKO [] , Dean of Law, University of Lvov

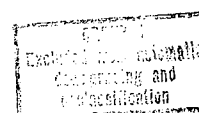
SOURCE : AECASSOWARY/29 from a Western citizen, a PhD engaged in research on the Soviet Union (hereinafter, the source), who talked with SOKURENKO

1. The source first met SOKURENKO at the University of Lvov in 1963 in the Ukraine. When he was in New York, SOKURENKO telephoned the source on 29 December 1966, and they met later the same day. SOKURENKO told the source he was visiting the United States on a UNESCO scholarship, working on a paper on the development of Ukrainian state law in the period 1870-1890, and doing research in the field of human rights. He is particularly interested in Ukrainian political thought; i.g., Drahomanov. The source and SOKURENKO discussed many topics of mutual interest during a 9-hour visit in the source's home. Following are some of the views expressed by SOKURENKO in reply to questions on the various topics asked by the source.

2. The Soviet Constitution. When Khrushchev was head of the commission on the Soviet Constitution, he changed directives frequently and didn't really know what he was doing. During the latter part of his reign, Khrushchev opposed any further liberalization in the economy and was against increasing the rights of the Union Republics. The main problem facing the new commission is on Soviet economy. The groundwork for efficient and proper functioning of the economy must be established. This is why many legal and economic experts were put on the staff of the new commission. The present trend is toward further general liberalization in economic planning and more freedom for the republics in political and cultural spheres. Simultaneously, the rights of communities and individuals will be increased.

3. The Nationalities Policy. The present trend of general liberalization is conducive to further changes in the nationalities policy. SHELEST initiated a trend which might be referred to as a new Skrypnykivshchyna, a new Ukrainization which now cannot be reversed. (C/O comment: Mykola SKRYPNYK was a middle-of-the road

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Ukrainian Bolshevik of the 1920's who advocated the government of the Ukrainian SSR be composed predominantly of Ukrainians.) The pace of the present Ukrainization is much slower than it was in the 1920's, but it is compensated by its durability and stability. SOKURENKO said he didn't want to see the Soviet nationalities problem solved the way the Yugoslavs tried to solve theirs, as Yugoslavia's nationalities problem has not really been solved. Ukrainians seek something more on the order of the "other people's democracies." A group of Ukrainian lawyers currently is making efforts to introduce a Ukrainian passport for Soviet Ukrainians travelling abroad, in lieu of the all-union Soviet passport now in use, but it is necessary to proceed with caution in this respect. Asked how large the group of lawyers was, SOKURENKO said, "We are quite numerous." SOKURENKO said he and his lawyer-colleagues also were making efforts to introduce the Ukrainian language not only into all educational institutions in the Ukraine but also into governmental and juridical establishments. (To an earlier Source with whom he spoke in November, SOKURENKO said that before the start of the 1965-1966 academic year there was a meeting of the Lvov faculty and administration to discuss the question of the language of instruction at the University and that the custom at Lvov University now is to use Ukrainian in all lectures, with certain exceptions made for visiting professors from other republics and where the majority of students is non-Ukrainian. In cases where a professor on tenure does not know Ukrainian, he is now expected to learn it within a certain length of time and lecture in that language.) He mentioned one situation where high school students protested the use of Ukrainian in class. The teacher told him he could attend a nearby Russian school if he found Ukrainian difficult to understand.

4. Agriculture. During the discussion about the Soviet Constitution, SOKURENKO mentioned that agriculture, which remains a sad state, ~~was~~ ^{is} a problem of great importance in ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~economy~~ ^{the}. He said new methods were being sought to revive the initiative of the peasant. There was no question about the liquidation of the collective farm, which in itself is a very good thing, but the system will have to be improved by new measures conducive to a higher rate of production on the part of the farm workers. KOSYGIN, who is a professional and an economist, is bound to come up with some good ideas.

5. LIBERMANISM. SOKURENKO commented that it was not fair to credit the new course of liberalization in Soviet economy to LIBERMAN alone, because other economists made even greater

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contributions. In his opinion, LIEBERMAN knew how to get all the credit not only for his own but plagiarized ideas as well. His name alone is lauded in the West because his Jewish compatriots want to make him famous.

6. Arrests and Trials of Ukrainian Intellectuals. Without specifying any numbers, SOKURENKO told about the arrests of Ukrainian intellectuals in 1965 for publishing and disseminating anti-Soviet literature. They were tried in 1966. Some were released following the trials, others were sentenced. They were sentenced under "a paragraph of the Criminal Code", so there was no question about the sentences from the legal standpoint. (C/O note: Those sent to corrective labor camps were sentenced under Article 62 of the Criminal Code of the UkSSR which is the same as Article 70 of the RSFSR CC. In a conversation in November with another source in another American city, SOKURENKO was reluctant to discuss the arrest, quoting Peter I, who said that we simple, sinning folk have no business in these affairs. Let the people in high positions take care of these things. It's better to sit still and low. "What can we do about it? We are not as yet in high places." To this earlier source SOKURENKO stated that those tried in Lvov were tried by Chief Judge S. Ryndyk, Lvov Oblast Justice, a native of Zhytomyr, and that SOKURENKO attended the first day of the trial.) SOKURENKO was not willing to comment on the purely humane and political aspect of the sentences. He felt, however, that the terms were not harsh. Soviet authorities do not apply harsh measures these days, resorting instead to measures of persuasion. As an example, SOKURENKO related a story about two Soviet Ukrainian students at the University of Lvov, a female and a male companion, who wrote and distributed to other students literature advocating an independent Ukraine. When apprehended, they were not punished. Their transgressions were merely pointed out to them, and "We told them that if they hoped to complete their studies and pursue their careers, they had better discontinue writing about an independent Ukraine."

a. There were student-let demonstrations, as well as demonstrations by the general public during the trial in Lvov of Ukrainians arrested for nationalist activities. In an effort on the part of the authorities to keep the turmoil from growing, none of the demonstrators was interrogated or persecuted in any way. The current method of dealing with deviationists is to use persuasion instead of punishment, so that any unrest not be exacerbated. There was a tendency on the part of the authorities

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to minimize the significance of the trials in the Ukraine, in an effort to have the events forgotten as soon as possible.

7. Ukrainian Schools and Publications. There are only three or four desiatyletkas for Ukrainians living in Kazakhstan, and there are no Ukrainian-language newspapers available in the RSFSR. Recently, however, complaints about this situation have been increasing, and "this is good. It is also good that the emigration has raised the question about Ukrainian-language publications for Ukrainians living in the RSFSR. The stronger the complaints in the emigration, the sooner the situation will be rectified."

8. The Ukrainian Catholic "Uniate" Church. There are no prospects in sight for restoration of the Uniate Church in the Ukraine. There is no room in the Soviet Union for the coexistence of two such well-organized, disagreeing forces as the Party and the Catholic Church.

9. General Comments. SOKURENKO said it was probable he would attend the World Congress of Political Sciences in Brussels.

a. He expressed disappointment at the ignorance he found in the United States about the Ukraine. He said he frequently found it necessary to locate the Ukraine on a map for university graduates, in order to carry on even a basic discussion with them about the Ukraine.

b. There are no foreign students and no Afro-Asian students enrolled at the Lvov University Law School.

[_____] Acting Chief, SB/S/CA

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